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Enthuſiaſm in Diſtreſs:

OR, AN

EXAMINATION

OF THE

Reflections upon Reaſon,

IN A

LETTER

TO

Phileleutherus Britannicus.

By THOMAS MORGAN.

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SIR,

THE different Opinions and Parties into which Mankind are divided about Matters of Religion, having determined you to attempt the uniting and reconciling them in one Scheme of ſpeculative Belief, and under one Form of Church-government; as I could not but look upon ſuch an Undertaking to be very extraordinary, and what no wiſe Man would venture at, without ſome ſuitable and very uncommon Abilities, I thought my ſelf concerned to examine the Plan you have lay'd down, and to weigh and conſider it in all its Parts, in Order to diſcover what mutual Relation, Connection, or Dependance there might be betwixt the ſeveral Springs and Movements of this new Contrivance. The Reſult of which, is, that *your Hypotheſis*, like

all the *reſt*, which have been hitherto coin'd for the ſame Purpoſe, appears to me to be altogether precarious and inſufficient; neither conſiſtent with it ſelf, nor in any wiſe adjuſted or accommodated to the End you propoſe. The ſettling all Points of Difference in ſpeculative Belief, and the deciding all Controverſies relating to the different Modes, Rights, and Forms of Diſcipline, and external Worſhip, is beyond all Diſpute a Matter of great Difficulty; and therefore if any one ſhould think it poſſible, and neceſſary, he ought to go about it with a very nice and diſtinguiſhing Hand, and proceed in a Buſineſs of ſuch Importance, with great Judgment and Caution. If ſuch a Decider does not pretend to *Infallibility*, he ought at leaſt, as a *Reconciler*, to make it appear that he is ſtrictly juſt and impartial, that he is himſelf ſufficiently free from any Thing of that Prejudice, Paſſion, and Party-zeal which he complains of in others, and that he has nothing in View but the Glory of God, the Advancement of true Religion, and the Happineſs of Mankind. But if among the ſeveral Sects and Factions, into which the Chriſtian World is divided, a flaming Zealot ſhould ſtand up, in the Name and Spirit of a *Party*, bidding

an

an open Defiance to all the *reſt*, and declaring that he can admit of no Terms but an abſolute Compliance, nor maintain any Peace or Communion with thoſe who are ſo ignorant and ſenſeleſs, or ſo wicked and preſumptuous, as to differ from him in Matters of ſpeculative Belief, Ritual Worſhip, or Church-government; it is plain, that by ſuch a Method a Man muſt put himſelf out of all Capacity of doing the leaſt Service, either to Religion in general, or to his own Cauſe in particular; ſince he hereby only enables his Adverſaries to engage him with the greater Advantage, and has nothing to expect from them but Pity or Contempt. This is a Method which I may preſume to ſay never made one Proſelyte, or ever convinced any unprejudiced Perſon, that the Man who thus contends for Religion, either underſtands it right, or appears to be in earneſt about it. He may be in good earneſt perhaps for the diſtinguiſhing Tenets and Criteria of a Party, but Catholick Chriſtianity and true Religion are quite another Thing.

You begin with an Obſervation and Complaint of the great and popular Abuſe of the Word *Reaſon*. "The Confuſion "introduced into our Language by the "Abuſe of Words, which have through

"Length

" Length of Time been perverted from
" their natural and primitive Significa-
" tion, has been learnedly obſerved and
" ſincerely lamented by a right Reverend
" Prelate of our Church. I have often
" wiſhed that the ſame judicious Hand,
" that has endeavoured with uncommon
" Zeal, to reſcue ſome Words from this
" lamentable Abuſe, ſuch as Church, Re-
" ligion, *&c.* would have alſo ſhewed
" ſome Regard to that much perverted
" and abuſed Word *Reaſon*, the Abuſe
" of which has been as fatal to Man-
" kind, as prejudicial to the publick
" Peace, and the Intereſts of Truth, as
" thoſe others which he has ſo elaborate-
" ly endeavoured to explain. Not to
" mention that his Lordſhip would here-
" by have wonderfully obliged ſeveral
" of his Admirers, *pretty Gentlemen*, who
" have heartily abjured Prieſt-craft, Bi-
" gotry, and ſlaviſh Submiſſion to Au-
" thority, and boldly and reſolutely aſ-
" ſert the Dignity of human Reaſon; yet
" for Want of a right Underſtanding of
" the Word, have been forced to defend
" it in a moſt unreaſonable Manner, with
" Nonſenſe and Abſurdity. In ſhort,
" there is ſcarce a Word in the *Engliſh*
" Tongue of a more general, uncer-
" tain, indeterminate Signification. Every

" wrong-

" wrong-headed Mortal calls his Miſun-
" derſtanding his Reaſon; every Man's
" different Way of apprehending or miſ-
" apprehending Things is Reaſon. So
" that there is no Opinion ſo abſurd, no
" Notion ſo ſilly, no Poſition ſo mon-
" ſtrous, but is defended and juſtified by
" Reaſon.--------But if every Man ſhall
" call his particular Way of thinking and
" judging by that oracular Name, he
" will make it the moſt uncertain, falla-
" cious Thing in the World, for it muſt
" be as various as the different Comple-
" ctions, Educations, Tempers, and al-
" moſt Features of thoſe who pretend to
" it". *p.* 3. 4, 5. Here you take it for granted as a very *plain Caſe*, that there are as many different Senſes and Acceptations of the Word *Reaſon* among Men, as there are different and contrary Opinions in the World; which is a Conceit ſo very peculiar, and ſo odd, that I imagin the intelligent Reader will hardly forbear laughing. The Matter of Fact is plainly this, that every Man does, and muſt ſuppoſe his own Opinion, whatever it be, to be true and reaſonable, ſince this is eſſential to all Belief as ſuch, and no Man can believe any Thing at all without believing it to be true, or agreeable to the real Exiſtence and natural

tural Relations of Things. Methinks therefore it is very hard, and looks a little ſpightful and ill natured, that you can allow none but your ſelf, and your own Party to ſuppoſe their own Opinions to be true and reaſonable. For this is really the mighty Grievance, the Evil which ſo deeply affects you; the different Opinions and Parties into which Men are divided about Matters of Religion, is what you cannot bear with any Patience, and therefore you would fain contrive a Method to bring them all into your own Scheme and Party, and thereby deliver them from the odious Characters of *pretty Gentlemen*, *minute Philoſophers*, *Scribblers*, and *wrong-headed Mortals*. But if you could accompliſh this notable Deſign, and make them all of your Mind, perhaps they might not be one Hair's Breadth the nearer to Truth and Reaſon in the Nature of Things; ſince I doubt not to make it appear that you, Sir, in this very Book, have as much miſtaken and perverted the right Uſe of *Reaſon*, both in *Name* and *Thing*, as any *pretty Gentleman*, or *minute Philoſopher* in the World. It is viſible that Men's Diſputes and different Opinions in religious Matters muſt remain the ſame, tho' they ſhould be all agreed, as

they

they really are, concerning the general abſtract Nature, Definitions, and different Acceptations of the Words *Truth* and *Reaſon*. A *Scotch* Presbyterian, an *Engliſh* Prelatiſt, and a *Roman* Catholick, would all readily agree in the general Signification, and various Acceptations of the Word *Reaſon*, and yet the Queſtion would ſtill remain betwixt them which Religion is the true, or moſt agreeable to the Will of God, and the Nature of Things. If a Queſtion ſhould ariſe concerning a certain Parcel of Matter, whether it be pure uncorrupted Gold or not, 'tis plain that Men might be of different Opinions about it, as their different Methods of Trial and Proof ſhould be more or leſs accurate. One perhaps might conclude it to be pure unmix'd Gold; another that there is a certain ſmall Mixture of Copper in it; and a third that there is no Copper at all, but a conſiderable Proportion of Lead, or Iron. Now ſhould any one adviſe them, in Order to a clear deciſive Determination of the Caſe, to ſettle the preciſe Meaning of the Words *Gold*, *Copper*, *Lead*, and *Iron*, ſuch a Propoſal might poſſibly give them ſome Diverſion, but would afford no Light towards ending the Diſpute. They would tell the Ad-

viſer, that they have no Diſpute about the Meaning of thoſe Words, that their Controverſy is real, and therefore if he can help them to any more certain or ſatisfactory Method of Proof, they are ready to thank him, but otherwiſe he might as well ſpare his Pains. Thus ſuppoſe a Company divided upon the Queſtion, whether a certain Perſon they are looking at be the Prince or not. Several perſonal Marks and Characteriſticks are brought on both Sides, ſome of which ſeem to agree, and others to diſagree, ſo that they can come to no common ſatisfactory Reſolution. But here a graveReaſonerſteps in,and tells them,Gentlemen, before you diſpute farther about this Matter, you ought to ſettle and aſcertain the clear determinate Signification of the Word *Prince*; what you mean by *Prince* in its general abſtract Nature, what by *a Prince*, and what by *the Prince*; and when you have once ſettled this grand Point, you will eaſily come to a Reſolution, whether the Perſon you diſpute about, be really *the Prince* or not. Muſt not this Formality look ridiculous? They would be doubtleſs ready to reply, Sir, we have no Controverſy about the general abſtract Nature of *a Prince*, and we all mean

mean the ſame Thing, the ſame Perſon, by *the Prince*. If therefore you can help us to any more certain Marks or Characteriſticks of *the Prince*, whereby to determine the Queſtion to the Satisfaction of thoſe who doubt whether this Perſon be the Prince or no, we ſhall reckon our ſelves obliged; but the Method you propoſe can be of no Service to us at all. This, Sir, is the Caſe here; you have taken Pains to ſettle the Meaning and different Acceptation of the Word *Reaſon*, without being able to ſhew, that any one Point of difference now in Debate depends upon it. Mankind are divided into Different Opinions and Parties about Religion, and the Difficulty is how to unite and reconcile them; to which Purpoſe you think it of great Importance, to ſettle the proper and genuine Signification of the Word *Reaſon*, and you tell us that Reaſon ſtands, either, firſt and principally, for the eternal immutable Relations, Habitudes, and Analogies of Things; or ſecondly, for the Underſtanding or reaſoning Faculty it ſelf; or thirdly, for the Act of Reaſoning; or laſtly, for the rational objective Proof, or the intermediate Ideas, made uſe of in Order to diſcover the Relation and Connection of any two remote Ideas. Theſe are

the different Acceptations of the Word *Reaſon*, and if, you think, the pretty Gentlemen and minute Philoſophers did but conſider this, they would not trifle, and talk Nonſenſe as they do.

'Tis Pity methinks you had not condeſcended to have given us ſome particular Inſtances, wherein the ſettling the Senſe and different Acceptations of the Word *Reaſon*, could in the leaſt tend to clear up any Queſtion or Controverſy now on Foot. But this muſt have utterly ſpoil'd a fine Harangue, and quite effaced and rubb'd off all the Colourings from a ſeeming Piece of Wit.

'Tis of the greateſt Conſequence to ſettle the clear determinate Senſe and Meaning of the Words, upon which a particular Controverſy chiefly depends, ſince otherwiſe no Debate whatever can be brought to any Iſſue. And therefore the right reverend Prelate you here aim at, had great Reaſon to fix and aſcertain the Senſe of the Words *Church*, *Religion*, *Authority*, &c. about which he was diſputing. And this his Lordſhip has done ſo effectually, and with ſuch Succeſs, that his Adverſaries have nothing to ſay, but by keeping up a mere verbal Strife, and inſiſting upon a different Senſe of the Words, from his Lordſhip's plain

plain declared Senſe; and this too in direct Oppoſition to the Nature and Reaſon of the Things themſelves. If you will call any external Rites and Forms of Worſhip, of mere human Inſtitution by the Name of *Religion*, 'tis plain that by *Religion* you can only mean ſome *outward Practice*, as abſtracted from that *inward Sincerity*, to which human Cognizance and Juriſdiction cannot poſſibly extend, and yet without which there can be no ſuch Thing as *Religion* at all.

You might in the ſame Way of trifling, while your Hand was ſo happily in, have obliged the World farther, by ſettling the clear determinate Senſe and different Acceptations of the Word SCRIPTURE. In your Way of talking, *There is ſcarce a Word in the* Engliſh *Tongue of a more general looſe, and indeterminate Signification. Every wrong-Headed Mortal calls his Miſunderſtanding by the Name of* SCRIPTURE; *every Man's different Way of apprehending, or miſapprehending Things is* SCRIPTURE. *So that there is no Opinion ſo abſurd, no Notion ſo ſilly, no Poſition ſo monſtrous, but is defended and juſtified by* SCRIPTURE. Methinks therefore no Word in the *Engliſh* Tongue could have more

needed

needed an Explication from ſo great a Maſter, than the Word *Scripture*; eſpecially when you tell us, there are Articles of Faith to be built upon it, which are abſolutely unintelligible, and above and beyond all human Reaſon and Comprehenſion. This I think even in your own Account, muſt be allow'd to be as great a Defect in your Performance, as any thing you complain of, that his Lordſhip had omitted. And therefore how averſe ſoever you might otherwiſe be to the granting of ſuch a Favour, I hope you will forgive his Lordſhip, if not in Point of *Juſtice*, at leaſt for your *own Sake*.

I intirely agree with you, that Chriſtianity in its whole Frame and Conſtitution, with Regard both to its Doctrines and Duties, Theory and Practice, is highly reaſonable; exactly conformable to the Nature and Attributes of God, and moſt effectually conducive to the true Happineſs and moral Perfection of Mankind. But yet I muſt freely declare, that I cannot think the Method you have taken with the *Deiſts*, and *Free-thinkers*, is likely to have much Effect towards their Conviction. For as Juſtice is due even to the Devil himſelf, I muſt here put you in Mind of one Thing that I take

take to be a fundamental Error in your Way of Reaſoning with them, and which I fear will hinder in great Meaſure the good Effect your Diſcourſe might otherwiſe have had upon them; and that is, the viſible Partiality you all along diſcover, in charging their Luſts and Vices as the Conſequence of their Principles. 'Tis moſt evident in Fact, that any Scheme of ſpeculative Belief whatever, one as well as another, may conſiſt and ſtand together with a wicked and profligate Life. The vitious and immoral among all Parties, and there are but too many ſuch, find ſome Way or other to elude their own Principles, in Order to make Way for their ſinful Purſuits, and the Gratification of their Luſts and Paſſions.

You are very angry with thoſe who make ſo free in their Declamations upon the Luſts and Vices of your own Clergy, and you would think it very unreaſonable to have their Practice in this Reſpect charged upon their Principles, or aſſigned as the Reaſon why they cannot be convinced of the Abſurdity, and Preſumption of the Claims they lay in to certain Powers and Prerogatives, which cannot belong to them; and yet a *Deiſt* or *Freethinker* might eaſily make even with you upon this Score, if you could be content

to

to be repaid in your own Coin, and take *Railing* for *Reaſoning*.

But when you vouchſafe to argue with any Sort of Men, you muſt ſuppoſe them convincible, for otherwiſe you would not throw away your Time and Pains about them. If a *Deiſt* be under the abſolute Power and Influence of his Luſts and Paſſions, and reſolved not to conſider or examin any Thing, that might take him off from, or diſturb him in his ſinful Purſuits, 'tis plain that he muſt be uncapable of Conviction, and it would be to no Purpoſe to offer Reaſons and Arguments againſt him; and the Caſe will be the ſame if you apply it to a *Quaker*, a *Presbyterian*, a Church of *England* Man, or a *Papiſt*. In Point of Prejudice, Luſt, and Paſſion therefore (which are undoubtedly the great Obſtacles to a more free and impartial Enquiry after Truth) you ought in all Reaſon to place your own Party upon a Level with others; and if you will not admit of this, you may ſtand the Ridicule of *Deiſts* and *Free-thinkers* as well as you can, and return Railing for Railing at leaſt, if you cannot return Wit for Wit; but every impartial By-ſtander I ſuppoſe muſt look upon this, as a Scuffle of very little Conſequence. A *Deiſt* if he be really

ſuch,

ſuch, muſt, upon his own Principles, think himſelf obliged to Practiſe all the Duties, and ſubmit to the ſeveral Obligations of natural Religion; and this would be a fair Step, and great Advance towards Chriſtianity. You allow that Chriſtianity is nothing elſe but natural Religion, enforced upon ſtronger and more powerful Motives, and directed to higher and nobler Ends; and conſequently you muſt, I preſume, allow, that Deiſm is a very good and ſufficient Preparative to Chriſtianity. Let us ſuppoſe then a ſincere *Deiſt*, one who both underſtands and practiſes the Principles of natural Religion, let ſuch an one, I ſay, come to you for farther Advice and Inſtructions, declaring, that he is readily diſpoſed to embrace the Chriſtian Religion, upon ſufficient Evidence of its Truth and Reaſonableneſs. Now this being the Caſe, you cannot, I think, juſtly reject him, and no Doubt you would conduct him in a ſcientifick Way, from Definitions, Axioms, and *Præcognita*, to the more remote, implicate, and difficult Concluſions.

I could wiſh you had obliged us, with a more ſuccinct Account of your Method of teaching this Science; but ſince you have not thought fit to be very particular, we muſt be content with ſuch

Hints as you have given us. The firſt Principle then that you lay down as the Foundation of the Chriſtian *Faith*, is this, that there are certain unintelligible Doctrines in the Chriſtian Syſtem, which being abſolutely above and beyond all human Reaſon and Comprehenſion, we are yet required to believe as neceſſary to Salvation. Your Words are theſe, *p.* 33. "But the greateſt Difficulty is "ſtill behind; and that is the Myſteries "of the Goſpel, certain unintelligible "Doctrines, impoſed upon us as Articles "of Faith, which no mortal Man can ex-"plain or comprehend; and yet we are "told that theſe are neceſſary to be be-"lieved in order to Salvation, which "ſeems very abſurd and unreaſonable. "And here I muſt premiſe a very neceſſa-"ry Diſtinction, tho' very much explo-"ded by ſome *little Scribblers*, betwixt "being *above our Reaſon* and *contrary to* "*it*. The Shortneſs and Weakneſs of our "Underſtandings, cannot comprehend "or explain many Things, that are ſen-"ſibly and demonſtrably certain; but "no Man ſure will be ſo weak as to diſ-"believe his Senſes, and deny the cer-"tainty of ſeveral Effects in Nature, be-"cauſe he cannot explain their ſeveral "Cauſes, nor the exact Method, Reaſon,

"and

" and Manner of their Production. Let
" this be granted, and then let us ſee
" whether our Patrons of Reaſon, muſt
" not diſdain their Senſes as well as their
" Faith. If they reſolve to believe no-
" thing of which they have not adequate
" Ideas, the neceſſary Modes and Relati-
" ons of which they cannot explain,
" what adequate Idea have theſe Gentle-
" men of Matter? what is the Eſſence
" of it? They tell you it is an extended
" impenetrable Subſtance, having Parts
" without Parts. Well, but all this while
" we apprehend nothing by this Defini-
" tion, but a Congeries of Accidents and
" Qualities, ſuch as Extention, Impene-
" trability, *&c.* But what is the Subject,
" the *Subſtratum* of theſe Accidents?
" What is the Subject to which theſe Pre-
" dicates belong? What is the naked Eſ-
" ſence of Matter, ſtript of all its Acci-
" dents, which tho' inſeparable in Fact,
" may, one would think, be diſtinguiſhed
" in the Underſtanding? And one would
" be apt to imagine, that any Idea ſhort of
" this, were inadequate and imperfect.
" But does any one doubt of its Ex-
" iſtence? Do we not diſcourſe, reaſon
" and judge about it? And in ſhort, our
" Notions of Spirit are as obſcure and
" inadequate as thoſe of Matter; about

" which,

" which, however, we argue and draw " Conſequences, with as much Certainty, " as from any other Subject or Matter of " Science". Here we have your main Principle upon which the Chriſtian Faith is to be built, together with your Evidence for it, and you cannot complain that I have not quoted you fairly. I muſt own my ſelf to be one of thoſe *Scribblers*, who have thrown off this Diſtinction, as it is commonly underſtood and apply'd, or rather as I think miſunderſtood and abuſed.

But I did not do this without aſſigning my Reaſons for it, and ſuch as have never yet been anſwered; and when any Man, how great a Maſter ſoever he may be, in arguing for a Point, ſuppreſſes any material Evidence againſt it, he does but betray and expoſe, inſtead of defending his Cauſe. You ought to have cleared the Ground of your Diſtinction, betwixt Things *above Reaſon*, and *contrary to it*, and have made it appear that the *rational Belief*, or *Aſſent of the Mind*, might in any Inſtance be carried beyond the *Perception* of the *Underſtanding*; but inſtead of this you only raiſe a Miſt about the naked Eſſences, and unknown Cauſes of Things. And in theſe Matters you pretend to exerciſe a Faith that

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is *above Reaſon*, or to *believe* beyond what you *perceive*; nay, that you can reaſon clearly, and draw the moſt certain and undoubted Conſequences, from Things of which you have no Knowledge, Idea, or *Perception*. I muſt own that this is very ſurprizing, and if you can clear up this Method of Belief and Reaſoning, I ſhall look upon you to be one of the greateſt, and moſt extraordinary Divines and Philoſophers, that has ever yet appear'd in the World. You ask thoſe whom you call *Patrons of Reaſon*, what is the ſimple naked Eſſence of Matter, as abſtracted from all its Attributes and ſenſible Qualities? To which I readily anſwer that I cannot tell, I know not what it is, it comes not within the Province of my Underſtanding. But before you are too haſty in drawing any Conſequence from this Conceſſion, you muſt give me leave in my Turn to ask you, what you *believe* the real Eſſence of Matter to be? My Underſtanding cannot reach it, but it ſeems your *Faith* can. What then is the naked Eſſence of Matter according to your *Belief* of it? Your Anſwer to this will determine the Point, whether the real Eſſence of Matter be not ſomething as much above and beyond *your Faith*, as

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it is above and beyond *my Underſtanding*. And if this ſhould be ſo, I cannot ſee what Ground you have gain'd as a *Patron of Faith*. Perhaps you will ſay, that tho' you know not wherein the real Eſſence of Matter conſiſts, yet you believe that Matter is ſomething really exiſting; and herein my Underſtanding goes as far as your Faith. That there is ſomething really exiſting without you, which you call Matter, and which is ſome Way or other the Cauſe or Occaſion of certain Ideas and Senſations excited in your Mind, is evident in Fact, and as certain as Senſe it ſelf can make it; and therefore this is what you know and perceive, as well as believe; but wherein that Something conſiſts as to its abſolute real Eſſence, or what it is by which thoſe Senſations are excited in your Mind, can be no more a Matter of Faith, than it is of Perception or Knowledge. If you ſhould receive a Blow in the dark, you would certainly conclude that Something ſtrikes you, tho' perhaps you know not what; for while you feel and are ſenſible of the Blow, you muſt needs perceive and aſſent to the Truth of this ſelf evident Propoſition, that ſuch an Effect cannot proceed from no Cauſe at all.

Now

Now you might call this unknown Cauſe, *Matter*; yet ſtill that bare *Name*, while it is ſuppoſed to ſtand for Something unknown, can add no more to your *Faith*, than it does to your *Underſtanding*, and you can reaſonably *believe*, no more than you *know*, or *perceive* concerning it. It reſts upon you here, to give ſome particular and clear Inſtance of any one ſingle Propoſition, which you believe, or aſſent to, without underſtanding the Signification of the Terms, or without having any ſettled determined Ideas of the Thing believed, which if you are not able to do, it muſt be ſtill evident that your *Faith*, or *rational Aſſent*, cannot advance one Hair's-breadth beyond your Ideas, or the Pereeption of your Underſtanding. But in your Account, one may not only believe what is unintelligible, incomprehenſible, and above Reaſon, but likewiſe diſcourſe and argue upon it, and draw the moſt certain and undoubted Conſequences from it. So that here is not only *Faith* above *Reaſon*, but even *Reaſon* above *Reaſon*, Knowledge above and beyond all our Ideas and Perceptions, and a Science without rational Evidence: For you tell us, that tho' we know nothing of the Subſtance, Subſtratum, or real Eſſence of Things,

Things, yet we argue about it, and draw Conſequences from it, with as much Clearneſs and Certainty, as from any *other* Subject, or *Matter of Science*. But this is certainly a very great *Miſtake*, and if it had not been made by a Gentleman, who is ſo much advanced above the *Scribblers* and *minute Philoſophers*, I ſhould have call'd it a very great *Blunder*. How any Thing of which we have no Idea or Perception at all, ſhould be a *Matter of Science*, is very hard to conceive, and will not, I preſume be well underſtood without ſome farther Explication. 'Tis Pity methinks you had not condeſcended, to have given us ſome particular Inſtances, in which we are ſuppoſed to argue about, and draw Conſequences from the naked abſtract Eſſences of Things, as they exiſt abſolutely and in their own Nature, or *extra Mentem*: But 'tis ſufficient, it ſeems, to ſuppoſe or take the Thing for granted, and to ask whether thoſe who deny it, muſt not diſdain their *Senſes as well as their Faith*. But without diſdaining either *Faith*, or *Senſe*, I dare undertake to prove that your Method of Reaſoning is impoſſible, and contrary to Reaſon. That we have no Idea of Matter, abſtracted from all its Attributes and ſenſible

ſible Qualities, *i. e.* from all the Ideas we have of it, is very ſure, nor is it eaſy to conceive how we ſhould; but then I ſay that 'tis impoſſible to argue and reaſon about it, impoſſible to draw any Conſequences from it, farther than our Ideas go. The Act of Reaſoning, in its very Nature and Definition conſiſts, in aranging our Ideas ſo, as to diſcover the Relation and Connection of any two remote Ideas, by a right Order and Diſpoſition of other intermediate Ideas; but ſince we have no Idea at all of pure Eſſence, Subſtance, or *Subſtratum*, as ſubſtracted from all its Attributes and Properties, 'tis evident, that this Idea which we have not, cannot come into the Account of our Diſcourſes and Reaſonings. A Man indeed may talk Non-ſenſe, as well as believe Non-ſenſe, and he may call the one *Faith*, and the other *Reaſon*; but his real *Faith*, as well as his Knowledge and Reaſon if he has any, muſt be confined to his Ideas; and if this will not content him, he may trifle and ramble, he may loſe his Way, and wander in the dark, but he can never argue, reaſon, or clear up the Truth. From hence I think it is plain, that in your Way, that *Faith* which is *above Reaſon*, will be likewiſe *contrary to Reaſon*; and conſe-

quently that your ſeeming Diſtinction is really no Diſtinction at all, but muſt bring the Matter to this, that we are bound under the Penalty of eternal Damnation, *to believe Things contrary to Reaſon.* Having laid this ſolid Foundation, you proceed with your Account of the Chriſtian Myſteries, *p.* 31. "The firſt "and great Myſtery, which is at pre- "ſent the ſtumbling Block of our rati- "onal Men, is that of the holy undivided "Trinity: Three co-eſſential co-eternal "Perſons, ſubſiſting in the ſame Eſſence. "This they ſay, is a Contradiction, that "*one* ſhould be *three*, and *three* ſhould "be *one.* And ſo it would indeed, if "they ſhould be the ſame in the ſame "Reſpect; but what the Holy Scripture "*aſſerts*, is, that they are *three in Per-* "*ſon*, and but *one in Eſſence*".

You are always wonderful happy in the clearing of Difficulties, and if you can make good what you here ſay, you will have decided this Controverſy at once, and we ſhall all from henceforth agree at leaſt in Words, whether we mean the ſame Thing or not. But I fear, Sir, that your Zeal has in this Caſe been prejudicial to your Memory. Where I beſeech you does the Holy Scripture *aſſert* this, that they are *three*

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in *Perſon*, and but *one* in *Eſſence*? Others indeed before you have pretended to draw this as a *Conſequence*, and have accordingly ſet it up as their own Inference and Deduction from Scripture; but that it ſhould be Scripture it ſelf, or a *Scripture Aſſertion*, was never I ſuppoſe known or heard of till now. If you have found out any *ſuch Aſſertion*, in any hitherto unknown Copy or Manuſcript of the New Teſtament, I hope you will not long conceal ſo very material and remarkable a Diſcovery; but if you can produce no ſuch Evidence, I think you have here diſcovered ſomething, that you had much better have concealed. One would think that ſelf-Exiſtence and originate Exiſtence, Begotten and Unbegotten, ſhould be an eſſential Difference, and that the ſame numerical Eſſence cannot be originate and unoriginate, ſelf-exiſtent and derived; but this you will allow to be *above* Reaſon, and therefore perhaps it may be as impoſſible, as if it were *contrary* to Reaſon. You go on to inſtance in the Myſtery of the Incarnation, *&c.* But ſince you have neither ſufficiently explain'd your ſelf, nor offered any Thing in Confirmation of your own Opinion, and have ta-

ken Care not to leave your ſelf account-able, for any one Propoſition of a clear determinate Meaning, I ſhall diſmiſs this Subject, and not drag you into the Controverſy againſt your Will.

I ſhall now proceed to examine, and make ſome Remarks upon the Method you propoſe, in Order to unite and reconcile the ſeveral Sects and Parties among Chriſtians, in one Scheme of Belief, under one Form and Model of external Worſhip, and Church-government. Now here you grant, *p.* 50. what you ſuppoſe all to be agreed in, that the *Scripture* is a plain intelligible Rule of Faith and Practice. You obſerve very well, *That if it be not intelligible, it cannot anſwer the Ends for which it was given; for that no Man can be taught, reproved, corrected, or inſtructed, by what he does not, or cannot underſtand. And that it is Inconſiſtent, either with the Wiſdom or Goodneſs of God, to give us a Revelation to be a Guide to Truth, and a Rule of Righteouſneſs, which is not eaſy to be underſtood by every honeſt Enquirer.* Now from hence you infer, "That the Holy Scriptures are in their "own Nature, a plain, eaſy, and intelli-"gible Standard of Truth and Rule of "Faith;

" Faith; and that the Difficulties in ex-
" plaining them are of our own making,
" ariſing not from any Obſcurity in the
" Books themſelves, but from a *natural*
" or *moral Incapacity* in the Readers
" or Interpreters". Here after you had granted the *Scriptures* to be a plain, eaſy, and intelligible Rule of Faith and Practice to every *honeſt Enquirer*, or to all who are morally diſpoſed for it, and do not incapacitate themſelves, you preſently reaſſume the Grant by a *natural Incapacity*; for in Order to a right underſtanding of *Scripture*, in many very great and important Points relating to both Faith and Practice, you require a great deal of Knowledge and Skill in Languages and Criticiſm, an Ability to examine and compare the different Uſe and Acceptation of certain technical Words, and a thorough Acquaintance in eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. Now theſe are Qualifications, which muſt at leaſt incapacitate 999 in a 1000 of thoſe, who might be otherwiſe *honeſt Enquirers*, and morally diſpoſed to receive and obey the Truth. But how comes it about, that while you here maintain the *Scripture* to be an eaſy intelligible Standard and Rule of Faith and Practice to every *honeſt Enquirer*, and that it muſt be inconſiſtent with the

Wiſdom

Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God to ſuppoſe otherwiſe, that you ſuppoſe at the ſame Time, not one in a Thouſand of thoſe *honeſt Enquirers* capable of the right Uſe and Application of this plain and eaſy Rule? To what Purpoſe is it that a Rule is plain *in it ſelf*, if it is above and beyond the *natural Capacities* of thoſe for whom it is intended? Every Thing I ſuppoſe is plain and intelligible enough *in it ſelf*, and the Reaſon why we do not underſtand every Thing, and are not omniſcient, is only for Want of a *natural Capacity*. 'Tis inconſiſtent then it ſeems with the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, to give us a Rule of Faith and Practice, which is not plain, eaſy, and intelligible to every *honeſt Enquirer*, and yet God has given us ſuch a Rule, which can only be underſtood and explain'd by *Philoſophers and learned Men*; nay, which cannot be underſtood by any *mortal Man*; for I hope you have not ſo forgot your Notion of *Myſteries*, or thoſe Articles of Faith, which are neceſſary to be believed in Order to Salvation, and which are yet perfectly unintelligible, or above and beyond all human Reaſon and Comprehenſion. No Man can be *taught, reproved, corrected, or inſtructed by what he does not or cannot*

cannot underſtand; and yet the principal Articles of the Chriſtian Faith are ſuch, as he does not and cannot underſtand. The *Scripture* therefore according to you, muſt be a plain, eaſy, intelligible Rule, that cannot be explain'd or underſtood; and it muſt doubtleſs very much conduce to the Conviction of *Deiſts* and *Infidels*, to be taught from ſo great a Maſter, that Chriſtianity is a Syſtem of very plain obſcure, eaſy difficult, intelligible incomprehenſible Doctrines.

But I ſhall farther conſider this, when I come to the Account you give of a ſuper-rational *Spirit* in Man, diſtinct from the rational Soul. At preſent the Difficulty is, how to reconcile Men in their different Notions and Apprehenſions concerning external ritual Worſhip, and Church-government. Now here you muſt allow, that the *Scripture* to the common People can be no Rule at all in thoſe Matters, becauſe they want a natural Capacity, or ſufficient Learning to enable and qualify them for ſuch Enquiries. But you will ſay perhaps, that theſe unlearned Chriſtians muſt be ſtill inexcuſable, if they are not directed right and led into the Truth, becauſe there are learned Men enough of *natu-*

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ral Capacity, who are ready to aſſiſt them by due Information, and right Inſtruction. I muſt ask you then, who and where are thoſe Men of *natural Capacity* and *Integrity*, whom all unlearned Chriſtians ought to refer to, and be determined by in ſuch Matters? If the Right of Judgment and Deciſion lies in *you*, and the learned Men of *your Party*, you ought to make it appear and produce your Commiſſion, ſo as to ſatisfy the learned honeſt Men of all other Parties, and then you need not doubt of the common People. But what lurks at the Bottom is this, that there are no learned honeſt Men of any other Church or Party but your own. If any Man is not of your Mind, in the diſputable Points relating to Hereſy, Schiſm, ritual Worſhip, and Church-government, it is for want of Learning or Integrity, and your Adverſaries are all either Fools or Knaves, or both. But if this be your Method of ſecuring the Claims and Intereſts of a Party, I doubt not but there are learned impartial Men enough, even in the Church of *England*, to deſpiſe ſuch a Defence. Your frequent applying the Caſe to the *Mathematicks*, in which the learned are all agreed, is mere trifling. If you would have the

Inſtance

Inſtance parallel, you muſt ſuppoſe the Mathematicians divided among themſelves, into different Sects and Parties, all contradicting and oppoſing one another, as is the Caſe with the learned Divines in the Matters you refer to; and then tell me what Weight or Authority they ought to have with the common People, in thoſe Matters concerning which they could never agree among themſelves. If the Mathematicians were no better agreed among themſelves about, the ſeveral Affections and Relations of Number and Quantity, than the warm Party Zealots are, in the diſputable Points relating to Rituals and Diſcipline, and yet ſhould diſcover the ſame Heat and Rage, in contending for their repugnant and irreconcilable Hypotheſes, they might very worthily be ſlighted and deſpiſed; but the Caſe is quite otherwiſe, and I am perſwaded your Argument will receive no Strength or Grace, by applying it to the *Mathematicks*. Let a Man's particular Scheme and Theory of ſpeculative Belief, and external Rites and Modes of Worſhip and Church-government be what it will, if he ſhall be too warm and zealous in contending for it, lay the whole Streſs of Chriſtianity up-

on it, and tack the Criteria of his own Party to the Catholick Terms of Salvation and Acceptance with God; the unprejudiced World will be apt to conclude, that there is Something more in it than he is willing to own, and that it is not ſo much Religion and the Salvation of Souls, as the Power and Intereſt of his own Party, that he is thus paſſionately concerned about; and how much ſoever a Deſign may be coloured or diſguiſed, it is for the moſt Part very eaſy to diſcover what Men are contending for, by their Manner of contending. From hence one can hardly be miſtaken, in gueſſing at the Reaſon of your Anger and Reſentments againſt that moſt excellent and truly Chriſtian Prelate, who has ſo bravely diſtinguiſhed himſelf, in Defence of the civil and religious Rights and Liberties of Mankind. His Lordſhip's Scheme, like the Goſpel it ſelf, caſts a favourable and benign Aſpect upon the World about him, and is not calculated to promote the ſecular excluſive Intereſt and exorbitant Power of a Party. He cannot juſtify any Church upon Earth in aſſuming the Prerogatives of Chriſt, and claiming a ſpiritual Juriſdiction over the Hearts and Conſciences of Men; he ſuppoſes all Men to

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be equally good Chriſtians, who equally ſubmit to the Authority of Chriſt, and who are equally and ſincerely diſpoſed to know and do the Will of God. The good Biſhop ever takes care to diſtinguiſh betwixt the peculiar Tenets of this or the other Party, and the Catholick Terms of Chriſtian Communion and Acceptance with God. Now this is treating Mankind fairly, and doing as one would be done by, for which it cannot be expected, that Men of your Caſt in Controverſy ſhould ever forgive his Lordſhip.

Before I quit what relates to his Lordſhip, I muſt here take a little Notice of the Abuſe you offer him, with Regard to his Notion of Sincerity. You have often wondered you ſay, *p.* 61. "What "Reaſon (*except Reaſons of State, which* "are always out of the Queſtion) ſhould "influence a Prelate of great Learning "and Sagacity, to ſcatter ſuch a looſe "indigeſted Notion among the giddy "unſtable Multitude; and to make it, as "he ſeems to have done, the chief, if not "the only Qualification for our Accep-"tance with God.--------The common "and popular Notion of Sincerity, is a "plain, open, and undiſguiſed Behaviour; "and a ſincere Man is one that ſays

" what he thinks, or means what he " ſays. And I can aſſure his Lordſhip, " whatever Intention he might have, " this is the Senſe in which the *Genera-* " *lity* of his Friends and Admirers un- " derſtand it, who upon his great Au- " thority ſpeak Peace to their Conſci- " ences, and think themſelves juſtify'd " before God and Man, for profeſſing " openly what they really and ſincerely " believe, be it in its own Nature true " or falſe: So that at this Rate there is " no ſuch Thing as poſitive Truth in " the Goſpel; or if there be, it is not " neceſſary to Salvation that it ſhould " be known; there is at this Rate, no " neceſſary Connection betwixt evange- " lical Truth and evangelical Holineſs: " So that had there been no *Scripture* " *given by Inſpiration of God, a Man* " *might have been perfect and throughly* " *furniſhed to all good Works*". You here charge upon the generality of his Lordſhip's Friends and Admirers, a very groſs and dangerous Notion of Sincerity, in which Senſe you ſay his Lordſhip has been generally underſtood, whatever he intended, and that Men ſpeak Peace to their Conſciences herein upon his Lordſhip's Authority. I believe I may claim at leaſt, the Honour of as large

large an Acquaintance, among his Lordſhip's Friends and Admirers, as you can pretend to; and yet ſo far as my Acquaintance or Information go, I can aſſure his Lordſhip, that the quite contrary to all this is true. And if you cannot produce any one learned Divine, or Caſuiſt, who has ever conſidered or treated of religious Sincerity in this groſs miſtaken Senſe; if you cannot find any one learned Man among his Lordſhip's Friends and Admirers, who has eſpouſed his Cauſe, or appeared in his Defence, and who has thus underſtood his Notion and Account of Sincerity; nay, if you cannot produce any of thoſe among the Generality of his Lordſhip's common Friends, and unlearned Admirers, who have ever been led into ſuch a Miſtake by his Lordſhip's Writings, or who ſpeak Peace to their Conſciences upon any ſuch Foundation; I ſay, if you can do nothing of all this, as I verily believe you cannot, I muſt here appeal to the Publick, whether you are not obliged ſolemnly to repent and humble your ſelf before God, and to ask Pardon of his Lordſhip, and the World, for this open and notorious Piece of pure Calumny and Scandal? Sincerity in his Lordſhip's

Account

Account conſiſts, in a Man's acting up with Steadineſs and Reſolution, to that which ſhall appear juſt and reaſonable to his own Underſtanding, *after a free impartial and unprejudiced Enquiry.*

I have never met with any one of his Lordſhip's Friends who has underſtood him otherwiſe, and I think it is hardly poſſible for any Man without the deepeſt Prejudice, and willful Blindneſs to underſtand him in any other Senſe. His Lordſhip's Notion of Sincerity is evidently the very ſame with that, which you have been forced to eſpouſe and declare for your ſelf; but the Difference lies here, that his Lordſhip can allow Men to be very ſincere and honeſt in their Enquiries (conſidering their different Capacities, Talents, and Opportunities) tho' they ſhould after all, differ very conſiderably in their Judgments concerning ſeveral ſpeculative Points of Belief, and the different Rights and Modes of external Worſhip, and Church-government; whereas you (for ſuch ſeems to be the Complection of your Conſcience) can allow no Man to be impartial and unprejudiced in his Enquiries, 'till he comes into your Scheme, and makes himſelf of your Party. For my own Part, tho' I can eaſily grant that a Man

a Man might be very ſincere and honeſt in his Enquiries, who ſhould give into the Scheme which you have here advanced; yet I am apt to think that his ſuppoſed Clearneſs, or great Satisfaction in it, muſt be owing to a certain Defect in his Underſtanding, which he is not ſenſible of. In your Way of Talking it might ſeem a little unaccountable, how a Man's being actually in the Right in all the Parts of his religious Scheme, ſhould be neceſſary to Salvation, and yet that there are ſome Errors in Judgment concerning ſuch Matters which are not damnable. Now to clear up this Difficulty you have found out a very remarkable Diſtinction; and you tell us, *p.* 63. "Tho' I do not pronounce every Error "of Judgment to be damnable, God "forbid! yet I do aſſert, that ſo far as "we are in Error, ſo far are we out of "the Way of Salvation, tho' we fancy "we are in the Right". I cannot eaſily reconcile what you ſay here, either to Truth, or common Senſe. You allow that there are ſome Errors in theſe Matters which are not damnable. No, *God forbid!* and yet all Error, ſo far as a Man is in it, puts him out of the Way of Salvation. If therefore he be really in it, it muſt really put him out of the

Way

Way of Salvation, but if he be only in Danger of it, or inclined towards it, it can only endanger his Salvation. I cannot perceive the Difference betwixt a damnable Error, and an Error that puts a Man out of the Way of Salvation: But what you ſeem to aim at is this, that Men may be partly out of the Way of Salvation, and partly in it. Some Errors put a Man quite out of the Way of Salvation, and ſome but half Way, or partly out. Perhaps it may be owing to the Dullneſs of my Apprehenſion, but I muſt own that I cannot conceive this; It ſeems to me that every Man muſt be either in, or out of the Way of Salvation, but if there be a middle State, I would ask what muſt become of this middling ſort of People, will they be either ſaved, or damned, or neither? And ſince all Error is not damnable, and yet all Error *ſo far* puts a Man out of the Way of Salvation, I would ask, how far upon your Principles a Man may be *ſaved*, out of the *Way of Salvation?* I hope, you will take ſome proper Opportunity farther to clear up and ſettle this very important Point. If you would do this, it might poſſibly give you an Occaſion to diſcover all the dark Receſſes of a Scheme, which I find you have not hitherto

therto thoroughly examined. But I muſt not forget the oracular Deciſion you have made, concerning the Point of Schiſm, between the Church and Diſſenters; which I the more willingly take Notice of, becauſe it may ſerve as a notable Inſtance of your Skill and Authority in deciding Controverſies, *p.* 58. "The Na-"ture and Guilt of Schiſm, is yet plain-"er to be underſtood, as depending on "fewer and more ſimple Ideas; ſo that a "moderate Share of Underſtanding, with "due Attention, Sincerity, and Ingenui-"ty, cannot fail to give a Man a right "Notion of it: And did I not know "the monſtrous *Artifice* and *Impudence* "of ſome of the Leaders, and the more "than ſuperſtitious Credulity of the "Herd; I ſhould be as much ſurpriz'd "at the ſeveral Separations from the "Church of *England*, as I ſhould, to "ſee a whole Nation at Logger-Heads "upon the Queſtion, whether a Trian-"gle had three Sides as well as three "Corners; and yet they all talk gravely "of their Reaſon, and offer many Rea-"ſons, as they call them, for their Sepa-"ration, which conſiſt of a certain Cant, "an odd Form of incoherent Words "uttered with a formal Countenance, "which are handed thro' the Crowd, "by a few, who are in the Direction of

" the Party; who muſt certainly *Act up*
" *on Reaſons, but ſuch as they dare not*
" *own to the abuſed Multitude*, who
" are led by the mere Force of empty
" Sounds, artfully apply'd, into the moſt
" abſurd Notions, and unreaſonable Pra-
" ctices. There is, for inſtance, a natural
" Malignity in the Words *Popery, Popiſh,*
" *Anti-chriſtian*, the *Maſs, Hierarchy*, &c.
" the Sound of them implies Error, Con-
" fuſion, Tyranny, the Devil and all his
" Works. On the other Hand, there is
" a Soul-ſaving Sweetneſs, a native Be-
" nignity in the Words, *Proteſtant Reli-*
" *gion, Goſpel Ordinances, Moderation,*
" *Edification*, &c. by a right Applica-
" tion of which, the Populace among
" them are as abſolutely led and direct-
" ed, as any Piece of Machinery upon
" Mr. *Powel*'s Theatre.-----Upon the
" whole they make as unreaſonable Pre-
" tences, to Reaſon, and Freedom of
" Thought, as their Brethren the *Free-*
" *thinkers*, and I muſt take the Liberty
" to ſay, that till they are able to prove,
" by a clear and evident Chain of Rea-
" ſon, that the Terms of Communion
" with the Church of *England* are un-
" reaſonable and ſinful, they muſt not
" take it ill to be told, that they are
" guilty of Schiſm, or a cauſeleſs Sepa-
" ration from a ſound Branch of the Ca-
" tholick

"tholick Church. Nor will it avail "them any Thing to inſiſt upon their "Sincerity, a Plea that may with as "much Propriety, be urged in Defence "of Treaſon, or Horſe-ſtealing, as of "Hereſy or Schiſm". Such a Piece of *Don Quixotiſm* as this, might have paſs'd perhaps as a notable ſmart Declamation in an Univerſity, and have been kindly taken by ſome implicite believing Zealots, who come to Church on *Sundays* only to be furniſhed with Matter of Rallery for the Week. But many Things which might do well enough among Friends, are not ſo proper for a more general Inſpection. The World will certainly diſtinguiſh betwixt Railing, and Reaſoning; and therefore I cannot but wonder you ſhould truſt this to a publick Examination and Scrutiny.

However, you acted prudently in Concealing your Name, ſince it can never be either for the Intereſt or Honour of thoſe who are imploy'd in ſuch Work to be perſonally known. As to the Diſſenters taking it ill to be call'd Schiſmaticks, you need not be in any Pain, Sir. For after ſo frank a Declaration of your Kindneſs, I dare engage for them, that they will not think any Thing you can ſay to be a Matter of much Scandal; and they

ought rather I think to Glory in it, that you have ſo ill an Opinion of them, after you have ſo plainly diſcovered your great Abilities againſt them. Whatever the Separation be betwixt the Conformiſts and Non-conformiſts, it is certainly mutual, and they both equally and alike ſeparate from one another. Suppoſe then, that to carry on the Jeſt, I ſhould ſet the *Kirk* of *Scotland* againſt you, and tell you roundly, that till you can prove by a clear and evident *Chain of Reaſon*, that the Terms of Communion with that *Kirk* are *unreaſonable* and *ſinful*, you muſt not take it ill to be told that you are guilty of *Schiſm*, or a cauſeleſs Separation from a *ſound Branch* of the *Catholick Church*. If you ſhould ſay, that the Model of Government, and Terms of Communion in that Church, have been already ſufficiently demonſtrated to be unreaſonable and ſinful, by many able and learned Men; a true *Kirk* Man will as abſolutely deny this, and as poſitively inſiſt on the contrary; and then he would be even with you, and have ſaid as much in Defence of his own Church, as you have in Defence of yours. But what do you here mean by a *ſound Branch* of the *Catholick Church*? Is your Church *ſound* in every Thing, in all

all Points of Faith and Practice without Exception? Have you nothing amiſs among you, no Flaws in the Conſtitution, nothing at all that needs Amendment? If this be the Caſe you are very happy, perfectly *ſound* indeed, and 'tis great Pity you ſhould not be able to make it appear, by a clear and evident *Chain of Reaſon*; this however I ſuppoſe, is what you will not pretend to make as evident, as it is that a Triangle has *three Sides* as well as *three Corners*. If therefore you muſt content your ſelf with being *ſound* in Fundamentals, ſound in all the Eſſentials of Chriſtianity, or in every Thing relating to the Catholick Terms of Communion, and Acceptance with God; if this be the only *Soundneſs* you can reaſonably pretend to, why, I beſeech you may not other Churches, other Branches of the Catholick Church be as *ſound* as yours, notwithſtanding their different Form and Model of external Worſhip and Church-government? All true Chriſtians who believe and practice every Thing the *Scripture* has made neceſſary to Salvation, muſt I ſuppoſe be of one Church and one Communion, even of the Catholick Church, whatever other Marks and Characteriſticks they may be diſtinguiſhed by, with Regard

to

to external Diſcipline, and Modes of Worſhip. If that Faith and Repentance which the Goſpel requires as the Means of our Juſtification and Acceptance with God, be not ſufficient to Catholick Unity and Communion, unleſs Men agree likewiſe, in one external Form of Church-government and ritual Worſhip, 'tis plain, there can be no ſuch Thing as a Catholick Church upon Earth; but the Church of *England* in particular, and all other Churches muſt be Schiſmatical with Reſpect to each other. And this will conſtitute not the Catholick Church, or the ſpiritual Kingdom of Chriſt, but a confuſed Medley and Jumble of ſecular Parties and Factions. When thoſe who ſhould be the Miniſters of Peace and Reconciliation, not contenting themſelves with the Catholick Terms of Communion as laid down in *Scripture*, ſhall form Parties and Factions, upon ſecular Views and Intereſts of their own, and endeavour to ſave Mens Souls by ſetting the World together by the Ears, they make themſelves the Subjects of Ridicule; and the Ridicule will be juſt from what Quarter ſoever it comes, and tho' it ſhould be laid in by *Atheiſts*, *Deiſts*, and *Infidels*. But however you may ſometimes to ſerve a

Turn

Turn cry up our legal Church Conſtitution as the beſt in the World, I could name you many Things, which have been loudly and bitterly complain'd of, by the Gentlemen of your Principles, as great and ſore Evils in the Church as eſtabliſhed by Law. What, I beſeech you in the Name of a high Church-man, can you think of a Church that has ſo far betray'd her Truſt, and the Chriſtian Cauſe, as to have given up and ſubjected all the Powers and Spiritualities of Chriſt's Kingdom to a Civil Juriſdiction? What, upon your own Principles, can you think of a Church that claims I know not what ſort of Authority, after ſhe has given up and ſworn away all Authority to the Crown? I hope, Sir, you are a good Church-man, and that you do not repent your Oaths, and therefore if you can find any Authority, that is neither Eccleſiaſtical nor Civil, nor of any Sort or Kind whatever, I ſhall readily ſubmit to you in all Matters, which may happen to fall under ſuch a Juriſdiction. Now ſetting aſide the Authority of the Church, which, I hope we may lawfully do, after the Church her ſelf has renounced all Authority upon Oath, I would fain know what Obligation the Diſſenters are under to Conformity,

mity, or how they come to be Schiſmaticks, for not worſhipping God according to the human Rites and Forms of the Church of *England?* It will be to no Purpoſe here to ſay, that the Terms of Conformity are not in themſelves ſinful, or that nothing is required upon the Foot of any human Authority, but Things indifferent; for let this be ſuppoſed at preſent, let the Things required be in their own Nature and common Uſe ever ſo *indifferent*, or even *trifling*, yet ſtill where there is no Authority there can be no Obligation to Obedience, and the Juſtice and Equity of throwing off any Claim of *Authority*, where there is no *Right*, will always be a ſufficient Reaſon for Non-ſubmiſſion. Beſides, if the Things impoſed are indifferent, why are they made neceſſary? Nothing I think can be more abſurd, than to pretend by any human Authority to alter the Nature of Things. If the *Croſs* in Baptiſm, for Inſtance, is indifferent, why is it inſeparablely looked on as a divine Inſtitution? And why muſt Children be deny'd Baptiſm, if their Parents cannot be ſatisfy'd in the Expediency or Lawfulneſs of it? Let me add, that Things which are in their own Nature indifferent or lawful, may not appear ſo to

every

every one alike. Natural Weakneſs, or an unavoidable Tenderneſs of Conſcience, may ſometimes occaſion even groundleſs Scruples, where there is no ſinful Prejudice or Paſſion in the Way. And muſt all ſuch be excluded from Chriſtian Communion, and given to the Devil only for want of a better Underſtanding, or a ſtronger Faith? The Church I ſuppoſe, as a tender Mother, ought to take a prudent Care of all her Children, and not nouriſh and cheriſh the ſtrong and healthy only, and caſt the weak and ſickly away. If a weak or ſickly Child has an Averſion to a particular Diſh, tho' perhaps it may be owing to his Diſtemper, why ſhould he be cramm'd with it, or caſt out of the Family and the Mother's Boſom to periſh for want of Food, becauſe he cannot feed as the ſtrong and healthy do? You may ſuppoſe therefore if you pleaſe, that the Diſſenters are under a *natural Incapacity* to Conformity, let their Scruples if you pleaſe be owing to an incurable Weakneſs of Underſtanding, yet ſtill you ought to remove the Ground of thoſe Scruples, eſpecially when by your own Acknowledgment the Matter of their Complaint is only Things indifferent, and ſuch as may be altered at Plea-

ſure. The Church might certainly leave Men to their Liberty in Things indifferent, and this is all that is deſired. To deſtroy Liberty in Things indifferent, is to exerciſe Authority only for Authority's ſake, which is the more inexcuſable, becauſe it lays the Impoſer under a Self-condemnation, and the neceſſity of confeſſing the Impoſition to be needleſs. I have ſaid all this upon your own Suppoſition, that the Terms of Conformity are in all Reſpects *Lawful*; yet it will not follow from hence that they are *neceſſary*, or that we are under any Obligation of ſubmitting to them. But after all, the *Lawfulneſs* of any mere human poſitive Rites and Inſtitutions, in the Worſhip of God, has never yet been clear'd. Let a Thing be ever ſo indifferent or lawful in its own Nature, and in civil and common Uſe, yet it cannot be infer'd from hence, that Men may introduce and practiſe it in the Worſhip of God, under a ſpiritual and religious ſignification; becauſe this takes the Thing off from its natural and common Uſe, and applies it to another Purpoſe without any ſufficient Authority. Doubtleſs you would think your ſelf very well juſtify'd in any of the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, if one ſhould

not

not be able to produce any clear expreſs Texts in which they are forbidden; and yet this is evidently a wrong Rule, and a Principle upon which a Thouſand other Ceremonies and human Inſtitutions might at any Time be introduced, and the Chriſtian Service rendered more grievous and burdenſome than the Law of *Moſes*. And it will be no good Anſwer to this Queſtion, *who hath requir'd theſe Things at your Hands*, to ſay that they were not forbidden, or that they were only in themſelves Things indifferent.

A Man might kill a Calf in his own Houſe, eat ſome Parts of it and burn the reſt, and this in its natural and common Uſe would be an indifferent Action: But who will ſay, that therefore the Church may inſtitute ſuch a Practice in her publick Service, as a Part of Religion and divine Worſhip? The extreme Difference in theſe two Caſes muſt be viſible to every Body. The Sacrificing of Dogs in the Temple was no where forbidden in the Law of *Moſes*, and yet we know that ſuch an Offering muſt have been *an Abomination to the Lord*. And why the Sacrifice of a *Dog* ſo abominable more than that of a *Goat*? I ſuppoſe it would be hard to find any Reaſon in the Nature of the Thing. But

the true Reaſon is plainly this, becauſe there was a Command in the one Caſe, and none in the other.

It might be wiſhed therefore, that thoſe who are ſo fond in ſome Caſes of imitating the Legal Prieſthood, and introducing real Sacrifices into the Chriſtian Service, would but conſider how punctually theſe Levitical Prieſts kept to their divine Inſtitution, and never receded from it in any one Particular, but God in ſome remarkable Way or other, diſcovered his Indignation and Diſpleaſure.

Theſe Conſiderations, to mention no more at preſent, ſeem to me to have ſome weight in them; but I hope you will take a proper Opportunity to make the contrary as evident, as that a Triangle muſt have *three Sides*, as well as *three Corners*; and that the Diſſenters are ſtill as inexcuſable in their Separation, as *Traitors* and *Horſe-ſtealers*.

Having thus knock'd down the Diſſenters, you proceed in the ſame Maſterly Way, to put an End to the Trinitarian Controverſy, *p.* 65. "And as for our "*Arian* Adverſaries, who talk more of "their Reaſon, and as much of their "Sincerity, as the Schiſmaticks; the "learned World will ſoon have a very "mean Opinion of either, unleſs they

"quit

"quit their Pretenſions to both, after "having been ſo clearly, ſo rationally, "ſo learnedly confuted, by thoſe many "*eminent Defenders* of the Catholick "Faith, that have of late glorioufly di-"ſtinguiſhed themſelves in that Contro-"verſy". What the *learned World* will conclude concerning *theſe Defenders*, or what Reputation they will ſecure to themſelves by that Time the Controverſy is ended, I cannot exactly determine; but one Thing I am pretty ſure of, that the *learned World* muſt have but a mean Opinion of your Performance, and that the Caſe of Orthodoxy is very little indebted to you for its *Defence*. But you ſeem to have been aware, that your Scheme could not be defended upon the *Principles of Reaſon*, and therefore not daring to venture your ſelf farther among theſe Quick-ſands, you think it expedient towards the Cloſe of your Book, to become Inviſible, by quitting the Body and the rational Soul, while you aſſume the Character, and talk in the Quality of a *Super-rational Spirit*. And having thus left the Regions of Mortality, ſoar'd above the third Heavens, and Clothed your ſelf with myſterious inacceſſible Light; you look down with Majeſty and Contempt upon thoſe

poor

poor groveling Creatures, who have no other perceptive Powers but Senſe and Reaſon, and who for want of ſpiritual Faculties, are as much inferior to your ſuper-rational Dignity, as a Worm is to an Angel. You tell us, *p.* 66. "That "there are in every true Chriſtian, three "diſtinct Conſtituent Principles, Body, "Soul, and Spirit; each of which have "their diſtinct Powers, Faculties, and "Offices". Here 'tis plain, that you conſider the *Spirit* as an immaterial Subſtance, or Subject of Agency and Properties diſtinct from the *Soul*. You juſt after indeed call the Spirit a *Faculty*, but then you call the *Soul* it ſelf a *Faculty* too; from whence one would think, that you make no Diſtinction in your Philoſophy between Subſtances and Attributes, Agents and Faculties, or at leaſt, that you know not what to make of *this Spirit*, nor are much concerned what other People think of it, provided they will but allow you to have ſaid ſomething Extraordinary; and this I ſuppoſe will be readily granted. You leave us at Liberty, to ſuppoſe this *Spirit* to be a Subſtance or a Property, a Subject, a Principle, a Faculty, or what we pleaſe. For my own Part, I am not much concerned to enquire what it is; but I ſhall ſettle the

the Account with you, in Reference to the *Body* and the *Soul* of Man, and having allotted theſe their due, you will have my free Leave to make the moſt of what remains for the *Spirit*. It may be worth while here to conſider the Reaſon you aſſign, why there muſt be ſuch a *Spirit* in Man, as a Subject or Principle of Actions and Properties, diſtinct from the *rational Soul*. And that is, becauſe otherwiſe as you imagine we could have no poſſible Communication with the ſpiritual World, or be capable of forming any Ideas but of bare material Objects. For you tell us, that, "By our bodily "Senſes we converſe with this material "World, ſurvey the ſeveral Parts of Mat-"ter, examine their Forms, Bulks, Di-"menſions, and other ſenſible Qualities: "From hence we raiſe Ideas, which are "lodged in the Memory, or painted on "the Imagination, and to judge of theſe, "to compare their ſeveral Habitudes and "Relations, and draw Concluſions, is "the *whole Province of Reaſon*".

Here you would perſwade us, that the rational Soul has no Ideas or Perceptions but thoſe of Senſation only, ſuch as are excited in the Mind, by the Impreſſions of material Objects upon the Senſories or material Organs, as the Ideas of *Extenſion*,

ſion, Solidity, Figure, Motion, Colour, Sound, &c. and conſequently that without ſome Principle or Faculty ſuperior to Reaſon, we could never form any Idea of a ſpiritual Being, or of any Thing but material Objects, and their ſeveral Modes, Relations, and Analogies to one another. I would here ask you in the firſt Place, whether thoſe Ideas of Senſation before mentioned, are not themſelves purely immaterial, and Modifications of the ſpiritual immaterial Soul? Thoſe Ideas which are the immediate Objects of your Senſe and Perception, are certainly immaterial; and tho' they give you Notice of the ſeveral Properties and Relations of Bodies without you, yet the Ideas themſelves I ſuppoſe are not *Matter*, or any Thing Corporeal. And therefore in theſe very *Senſations*, you know as much of *Spirit* as you do of *Matter*; you hereby perceive certain *Modes* and *Attributes* of *Spirit*, and this is all that you can know of *Matter*. But then you here allow farther, that the Soul has a Power of reflecting and reaſoning upon, of abſtracting, compounding, and comparing its Ideas, in order to diſcover their mutual Habitudes and Relations, by which we form *Propoſitions*, and come to the Knowledge of general

general *abſtract Truths.* Now by reflecting upon theſe *rational Operations* of the Mind, which are themſelves the Objects of our *Perception*, we derive and form to our ſelves an intirely new Set or Claſs of Ideas, as diſtinct and different from the Ideas of *Senſation*, as the neceſſary mechanical Motion of a *Body*, is from the intelligent free Agency of a *Spirit.* In this Way we come by the Ideas of *Perception, Volition, Intelligence, Reaſon, Liberty, active Power,* &c. and I hope you will not ſay that *theſe* are repreſentative of any Thing in *Bodies*, or that the abſtracting, compounding, comparing, and reaſoning about theſe and ſuch like Ideas, can carry us no farther than the *material World.* Again, by reflecting upon our ſelves, and the rational Operations of our own *Souls*, we find that our rational free Actions, have certain Relations of Fitneſs or Unfitneſs, Conformity, or Diſconformity to the Nature and Reaſon of Things; and from hence we form the Ideas of *Wiſdom* and *Folly*, *Juſtice* and *Injuſtice*, *Right* and *Wrong*, and the ſeveral Modes and Relations of *Virtue* and *Vice*, moral *Good* and *Evil*, which are ſimply and purely Attributes and Qualifications of *Spirit*, and of which we find not the leaſt Trace or Appearance in the whole Syſtem of *Bo-*

dies, or the *material World*. Having thus obtain'd the Ideas of Intelligence, Wiſdom, Liberty, and active Power, together with the ſeveral moral Relations of our rational free Actions, we form an Idea of *God*, or a Being of infinite abſolute Perfection, only by attributing all the limited finite Perfections we find in our ſelves, to God in an infinite degree, and removing from him whatever we conceive as implying any Thing of Weakneſs, Defect, or Imperfection. Here then is a rational, intelligible, and accountable Method of communicating with the *Spiritual World*, and with God the infinite Spirit, without your Contrivance of a ſuper-rational Spirit in Man, diſtinct from the *rational Soul*. And therefore ſhould we ſuppoſe this *Spirit* to be a mere Phantom, and Creature of your own Imagination, yet we ſhould not be ſo intirely deſtitute, as you imagine, of all the poſſible Means of obtaining our *ſupreme Felicity*. From hence perhaps it may appear, that what you call a moſt certain Metaphyſical Axiom, *That nothing can be in the Underſtanding, that was not firſt in the Senſes*, that this, I ſay, is ſo far from being *moſt certain*, that there is nothing either of *Truth* or *common Senſe* in it. And indeed when the Method of forming our

Ideas

Ideas of ſpiritual intelligent Beings, had been ſo clearly and demonſtratively explain'd and accounted for by the new Philoſophers, upon the *Principles* of *Reaſon*, 'tis wonderful methinks that ſo great a Maſter at this Time of Day, ſhould throw it all off, without aſſigning any Reaſons againſt it, and fly to an old exploded ſenſeleſs Axiom, in the *Pagan Philoſophy*, and to the new and vain Pretence of an immediate Inſpiration, and the Intuition of the LOGOS, the eſſential Wiſdom and Reaſon of God, by a ſuper-rational Spirit in Man, diſtinct from the rational Soul. However, if you will but do that Juſtice to the *Soul of Man*, as to allow her, her own proper Ideas of *Senſation* and *Reflection*, as they ſtand already in our publick Liſts, I ſuppoſe it may be long enough before you will find a third and diſtinct Claſs, as peculiar to the Spirit. This I think is plain, that you have not obliged us with any ſuch new Ideas; which gives one a ſhrewd Suſpicion that you had no ſuch to produce, and that not being able to talk clear and conſiſtent Senſe, upon the Subject you had undertaken, you were yet reſolved, rather than ſay nothing, to talk unintelligibly about it. I have the Honour to be acquainted with ſeveral Gentlemen of good Senſe, and

conſiderable Abilities, both among the modern Orthodox, and modern Hereticks, but cannot find one Man who pretends to have the leaſt Notion of this *ſuper-rational Spirit*, or what its Ideas, Perceptions, and Operations are; and yet was there any ſuch Thing, tho' the *carnal* and *rational Man* perhaps might not underſtand it, doubtleſs the *ſpiritual Men* muſt, unleſs the Spirit be ſuppoſed faſt aſleep in them too, as having never been once awakened by *Baptiſm* and *Regeneration*. If there be any Secret in the Application of that ſort of *Baptiſm*, which is neceſſary to awaken this *Spirit* by Regeneration, you would have done well to have Reveal'd this Myſtery to the World, and when you found us ſuch perfect Idiots in Theology, and the Doctrine of *Spirits*, methinks 'tis great Pity you ſhould have left us ſo without your farther Aſſiſtance. But ſince you pretend to ground this *Diſtinction*, or rather *Confuſion* of intelligent Subjects, *Souls*, and *Spirits* upon Scripture, it may not be amiſs perhaps to take a little Notice of what you ſay upon that Score, *p.* 68. "From theſe "three diſtinct Principles, ariſes that Di"ſtinction in Holy Scripture, between "Σαρκικὸς, the carnal Man, the Ψυχικὸς, "or natural Man, and the Πνευματικὸς,

"or

" or ſpiritual Man. The carnal Man is
" under the Dominion of the Fleſh,
" whoſe whole Delight is in gratifying
" his fleſhly Appetites, and theſe make
" up the Bulk of Mankind, and differ
" from the natural Man, as a ſagacious
" Brute does from a Man of Senſe. The
" natural Man is he that has Improved
" his rational Faculties, and prefers the
" exerciſe of his Underſtanding, before
" the Gratification of his Senſes; theſe
" are the great Maſters of *Reaſon*, the
" Leaders of the *Free-thinking Tribe*,
" cunning States-Men, acute Philoſo-
" phers, good Linguiſts, and Orators;
" but yet are as much Inferior to the
" ſpiritual Man, as the moſt illiterate
" Labourer or Mechanick, to the moſt
" ſubtle Philoſopher and Politician. Theſe
" three diſtinct Principles, have their
" proper Objects adapted to them, in the
" moſt exact Harmony and Proportion.
" So that as in the natural Body, the
" Eye cannot perceive the Harmony of
" Sounds, nor the Ear apprehend the
" Beauty of Colours, nor the Symmetry
" of Proportion, nor any one Senſe taſte
" or apprehend what are the proper Ob-
" jects of another; and as the united
" Power of all the Senſes cannot appre-
" hend, much leſs demonſtrate any ab-
" ſtract Truth, no more than a Man can

" ſmell

"ſmell a Syllogiſm, or eat a Demonſtra-
"tion; ſo neither can all the Powers
"of Reaſon apprehend thoſe ſpiritual
"Truths, and Myſteries of Religion,
"which are only to be apprehended by
"the Spirit; which is with Regard to
"them, the ſame as the Organs of Senſe
"are to their proper Objects. Hence it
"is evident, that he who would judge,
"determine, and purſue, the practical
"Concluſions of thoſe Determinations,
"about the Nature and Properties of
"ſpiritual and divine Things, by his
"Reaſon, acts as contrary to Reaſon, as
"he who ſhould attempt to ſee without
"Eyes, or hear without Ears". You here invent a Diſtinction between Σαρκικὸς, and Ψυχικὸς, the carnal, and the natural Man, without the leaſt Foundation or Appearance of Reaſon in the Holy Scriptures. Theſe Terms in Scripture, are every where uſed indifferently and without Diſtinction, as expreſſive of the very ſame perſonal Characteriſticks, Tempers, and Diſpoſitions of Mind. The *Fleſh* and the *Spirit*, with the different Effects and Fruits of each, are every where oppoſed as direct contraries, without the leaſt Hint or Intimation in Scripture, of any intermediate Principle, that is, neither Fleſh nor Spirit. You ſeem to take ſome Advantage from our *Engliſh*

liſh Tranſlation of the Word Ψυχικὸς, which we very indifferently render *natural*, and you would farther pervert the true Import of the Word, and make it ſignify *rational*. The Word Ψυχὴ is rendered frequently and indifferently by the *Engliſh* Words *Soul*, or *Life*. And ſtands plainly for the animal Nature of Man, or for the *Soul*, conſidered under its inferior animal or ſenſitive Capacity, as it receives Senſations, and various Impreſſions of Pleaſure and Pain, by means of its Union and Commerce with the Body. As on the other Hand the Πνεῦμα, or Spirit of Man, is the Soul conſidered in its ſuperior, rational, or intellectual Capacity. While a Man makes a right Uſe of his Reaſon, about the Intereſts and Concernments of his Soul, in Order to diſcharge his preſent Duty, and obtain the future Happineſs which the Goſpel propoſes, he is conſidered as *Spiritual*; but when this is neglected, when a Man perverts and abuſes his Reaſon, with Regard to the ſpiritual Intereſts and Concerns of his Soul, how wiſe or rational ſoever he may act in other Reſpects, he is in the Language and Stile of Scripture a *carnal* and *animal* Man: Becauſe whatever elſe he aims at and purſues, while he neglects his Soul and the Duties of Religion, all his other De-

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ſires and Purſuits muſt terminate in a mere *earthly Felicity*, the unreaſonable Inclination to *which*, ariſes from a corrupt vitiated and depraved *animal Conſtitution*. Hence St. *Paul* in *Gal.* 5. and other Places, where he reckons up the Works of the *Fleſh*, aſcribes to this Principle all ſorts of moral Evil, as well the more refined Vices of Philoſophers and Politicians, as the groſſer Luſts and Acts of Senſuality. So that what you will do in this Caſe with the Scripture, or where you will find your intermediate Principle, a natural or rational Man, who in the *Scripture Senſe* is neither a carnal or ſpiritual Man, I cannot imagine. There is one Thing farther that I cannot but obſerve and complain of, in this Management of yours, which is this, that while you are here robbing the Soul of one half of her Ideas in Order to furniſh out the Spirit, you beſtow the other half upon the Body; and hereby you ſeem to have quite rifled the Soul, leaving her a mere *raſa Tabula*, or naked Eſſence without any Ideas, Agency, or Attributes at all. You talk of the Bodily Senſes, the material Organs, or the *Eyes*, and *Ears*, as *perceiving*, and *judging*, with Reſpect to their proper Objects. It has been hitherto ſuppoſed by the Philoſophers and all *rational Men*, that

that 'tis the *Mind* or *Soul* only that perceives and judges by the Means and Inſtrumentality of the Eyes, Ears, and corporeal ſenſories. But here you make thoſe material Organs themſelves the Agents, or the Subjects of Intelligence, Perception, and Judgment with Reſpect to their *proper Objects*. Nay, theſe intelligent judicious Eyes and Ears, do not only perceive and judge, but they perceive and judge rationally and diſcriminately concerning the *Symmetry* and *Proportion*, of *Colours*, *Sounds*, &c. and therefore 'tis evident, that in your Account, theſe Organs, the Eyes, and Ears, *&c.* muſt perform all the Offices and Operations of the rational Soul, with Reſpect to their proper Objects; and ſince according to your *moſt certain* Axiom, nothing can be in the Underſtanding that was not firſt in the Senſes, I ſee no occaſion you can have in your Scheme, for any Underſtanding, or rational Soul at all. But as you are ſeldom pleaſed to aſſert any Thing, without denying it again in other Words, ſo here you preſently contradict your ſelf, by ſaying, that the united Power of *all the Senſes* cannot apprehend, much leſs demonſtrate any abſtracted Truth, no more than a Man can ſmell a Syllogiſm, or eat a Demonſtration. But

if you can ſhew how the Eyes and Ears ſhould perceive, and judge of the *Symmetry* and *Proportion* of Colours and Sounds, or of any *Symmetry* and *Proportion* at all, without comparing their Ideas, reaſoning upon them, and forming general abſtract Truths, if you can I ſay reconcile this, you will do Something that One can hardly expect from any Body elſe. But I need not take much Pains to ſhew the Abſurdity and Inconſiſtency of your Scheme, for you have defy'd your *own Reaſon* in ſo many *Self-contradictions*, that you have left ſcarce any Thing for an Anſwerer to do, but to collect and put them together. While you condeſcended to talk in the Quality of a reaſonable Creature, you aſſigned *Reaſon* a very large and extenſive *Province*; all the moral Virtues and practical Doctrines of Chriſtianity were then under the Juriſdiction of *Reaſon*: He who would judge of the Doctrines and Precepts of the Goſpel, muſt calmly *Conſult his Reaſon*, and then he will ſoon find, that they are only the Doctrines of natural Religion Improved, ſet in a clearer Light, and enforced by higher Motives and nobler Rewards, *p.* 43. The Holy Scriptures were then a *plain, eaſy, intelligible* Standard of Truth, and Rule of

Faith,

Faith, since no Man can be *taught*, *reproved*, *corrected*, or *instructed*, by what he does not or cannot *understand*; and a Man of common *Honesty* and *Capacity* might, even from the very worst MS. or Translation of the Bible, draw a *clear*, *uniform*, intelligible System of Duty, *p.* 50, 51. Nay, even the most abstracted and speculative Points of Divinity, the most subtle and refined Attributes and Relations of spiritual Beings, in Reference to Justification, Predestination, *&c.* were then properly *within the Verge and Province of Reason*, and might be very easily and plainly accounted for, by a Person of *Right Reason*, and an *honest Heart*, p. 57. But now you are got into your spiritual super-rational Altitudes, all this is recall'd and revoked; Now, to examine and judge concerning the Modes, Properties, and Relations of Bodies and material Objects, is the *whole Province of Reason*. Reason is now tied down to Matter and Mechanical Motion, and cannot carry her Views or Inquiries, one Hair's Breadth beyond the *bare Intelligence* of the *bodily Senses*. 'Tis the *Spirit* only that can judge of *Spirits*. The rational Soul is a gross material Thing, but little if at all superior to the perceiving thinking material Organs, and

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he who ſhould go about to examine, or judge of the Nature, Properties, and Relations of *ſpiritual Beings*, by his *Reaſon*, would act as *contrary to Reaſon*, as he who ſhould pretend to *ſee without Eyes*, or to *hear without Ears*. But thoſe who can approve of, or embrace ſuch an Hypotheſis, muſt I ſuppoſe be neither rational nor ſuper-rational, and whatever your *Faith* be, ſure I am that your *Scheme* is abſurd, ſenſeleſs, and *contrary to Reaſon*. If you think that no rational *human Soul* ought to have made ſo free with the *human Spirit*, I have only this to ſay for my ſelf, that you had dreſs'd up and repreſented your *Spirit* in ſuch a manner, that I could not forbear laughing at it; and if the *ſpiritual Men* cannot take the *Ridicule*, they ought not to pour out their Contempt and Raillery upon others, without Argument or Reaſon. I am, Sir, in reference to all the Obligations of Juſtice and Charity

Your humble Servant,

Marlborough,
May 15. 1712.

T. M.

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FINIS.